

SPAIN.—So long as her colonies are dependent, Spain, from her jealousy, is our natural enemy, and always in either open or secret hostility with us. These countries, too, in war will be a powerful weight in her scale, and, in peace, totally shut to us. Interest, then, on the whole, would wish their independence, and justice makes the wish a duty. They have a right to be free, and we have a right to aid them, as a strong man has a right to assist a weak one assailed by a robber or a murderer. That a war is brewing between us and Spain cannot be doubted. When that disposition is matured on both sides, and your rupture can no longer be deferred, then will be the time for our joining the South Americans, and entering into treaties of alliance with them. There will then be but one opinion at home or abroad, that we shall be justifiable in choosing to have them with us, rather than against us. In the meantime, they will have organized regular governments, and perhaps have formed themselves into one or more confederacies; more than one, I hope, as in single mass they would be a very formidable neighbor. (To James Monroe. 1816. C. VI, 550.)

SPIRIT OF THE LAW.—Substance not circumstance is to be regarded while we have so many foes in our bowels and environing us on every side. He is a bad citizen who can entertain a doubt whether the law will justify him in saving his country or who will scruple to risk himself in support of the spirit of the law where avoidable accidents have prevented a literal compliance with it. (From a circular letter addressed to county magistrates during an invasion of Virginia, 1781. F. II., 43I-)

STATE GOVERNMENT.—But the true barriers of our liberty in this country are our State Governments, and the wisest conservative power ever contrived by man is that of which our Revolution and present government found us possessed. Seventeen distinct States, amalgamated into one as to their foreign concerns, but single and independent as to their internal administrations, regularly organized with a Legislature and Governor resting on the choice of the people, and enlightened by a free